



**WisDOT/Sierra Club Meeting**  
**Wednesday, October 6, 2004, 12:00-1:00pm**

People in attendance

Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP  
Bobbi Retzlaff, WisDOT, BOP  
Doug Dalton, WisDOT, BOP  
Sandy Beauprè, WISDOT, BOP

Brett Hulsey, Sierra Club  
Caryl Terrell, Sierra Club  
Gary Werner, Sierra Club

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 12:00. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an abbreviated overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*, as they had indicated they had seen much of the material on our web site. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from stakeholder groups at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.

2. Gathering of input from the Sierra Club: Discussion focused on the following issues:

a. Corridors

Land use planning is needed along transportation facilities to preserve the facility and to maintain safety.

The Hwy. 12 model was a good one and should be applied on other projects.

Safety issues need to be identified along corridors. If safety issues are identified early, solutions may be cheaper. At a minimum the most dangerous intersections need to be identified.

The plan should address the most cost efficient way to move goods in a corridor over the long run. While it may currently be cheaper to transport goods via trucks, as highways become more congested, truck transportation will become more costly in both time and the need for more highways. Rail may be a cheaper alternative in the long run.

WisDOT should provide examples of more safe and less safe corridors. Education is often the key.

The corridor process should also look at the DNR state trails plan. The corridors present an opportunity to fill the gaps on the DNR state trails map. The state trail map could also be used to ensure the corridors don't result in barriers.

b. Highway health hazards

Health hazards associated with proximity to roadways is especially prevalent in urban areas. Every urban project needs to consider health and environmental justice impacts. Clean fleet and clean diesel do not make enough of an impact. Brett Hulsey handed out a report identifying some of the health hazards associated with proximity to highways.

A key to urban areas is to keep traffic flowing. Urban areas need rapid response teams for incident management.

c. Comprehensive planning/access management

WisDOT needs to provide leadership to local governments about what the real capacity of a highway is and the need for comprehensive planning.

WisDOT needs to highlight how facilities can be improved without causing development. WisDOT could use funding to leverage local funds to encourage access control and/or WisDOT could purchase extra right-of-way.

Trans 233 was a good rule, but needed more education to the general public on its benefits.

d. Multimodal

Wisconsin needs attractive alternatives (e.g., fast) to decrease reliance on automobiles and keep local traffic off highways.

WisDOT needs to look at how the different modes can work together.

The plan needs to address transit. Local plans often indicate that transit service should be expanded, but then the budget limitations result in transit service being reduced.

Looking ahead to 2030, DOT needs to ask whether it is sustainable to maintain the status quo. Projections indicate increased truck traffic. Perhaps the Plan should investigate the long-term feasibility of rail lines along Interstate highways.

The plan should address congestion at O'Hare airport. For example, a track in Madison currently runs to O'Hare. If the track were upgraded, it may result in reduced number of flights from Madison to Chicago, especially if the train schedule was convenient. This could decrease the number of flights into/out of O'Hare.

Sierra Club members urged the department to use the term "intercity high speed train" as opposed to "high speed rail." "Train" has positive connotations, while "rail" does not.

The plan process needs to identify and discuss the importance reducing the possibility of the highway system producing barriers for other modes (e.g. bike/ped crossings or underpasses).

e. Financing

The transportation budget needs to be viewed as a way to provide services such as improved mobility/accessibility.

The plan's finance section needs to explicitly state how transportation is funded (e.g., gas tax, user fees, property tax, etc.), including which government pays for what facilities/services (i.e. state vs. Local).

The formula needs to ensure that trucks pay proportionately for the amount of damage caused to the highway facility. It was suggested that the department develop a cost allocation report to determine if larger vehicles are paying their fair share.

f. Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs)

The TIP process used by MPOs should give a higher priority to projects that address safety concerns.

The public involvement process utilized by MPOs is not consistent. The state should set some criteria that the MPOs should use to develop their PI processes.

g. Highway Safety

Brett Hulsey indicated he would provide copies of the Sierra Club's "Death by Driving" report that highlights issues related to highway safety and proposes some recommendations to address highway fatalities.

h. Farmland Mitigation/Protection Program

WisDOT should establish a Farmland Mitigation/Protection Program, similar to the program for Wetland Mitigation. As highway projects are developed, WisDOT should purchase development rights along the right-of-way to preserve agricultural land.